

BEFORE  
THE PUBLIC SERVICE COMMISSION OF  
SOUTH CAROLINA  
DOCKET NO. 95-1082-E - ORDER NO. 95-1355 ✓  
JULY 12, 1995

IN RE: Request of Duke Power Company for            ) ORDER  
Approval of Waiver of Commission            ) APPROVING WAIVERS  
Rules 103-318, 103-370, and 103-373.    ) AND ESTABLISHING  
  ) MODIFICATIONS

This matter comes before the Public Service Commission of South Carolina (the Commission) on the request of Duke Power Company (Duke) for a waiver of certain provisions of the Commission's Regulations, and for approval of alternatives as suggested by Duke.

First, with regard to Regulation 103-318, Duke believes that the current rule which requires the utility to maintain test records for three years after the meter's retirement is unduly burdensome. According to Duke, the current rule requires it to retain large volumes of records, since meters can be moved anywhere on the Duke system. Since billing adjustments due to inaccurate meters are performed when a problem is detected, Duke feels that maintaining a meter test record for many years is not necessary. Duke therefore requests it be allowed to implement a retention period based on the meter's last test date, rather than the retirement date. Duke further requests that the retention period be three years from the date of the last test.

The Commission has examined this request for waiver of Regulation 103-318 and the requested modification therein, and believes that such should be granted, based on the reasoning as stated by Duke.

With regard to R.103-370 relating to periodic tests of meters, Duke requests approval to develop and implement changes for testing in-service self-contained polyphase meters. Duke's proposal is based on recommendations from the Research Triangle Institute. The proposal would reduce the number of meters tested annually from 8,500 to 4,300 with, according to Duke, an accompanying decrease in customer inconvenience and irritation. Removal and testing of these meters results in an outage to the customer. Customers with microbased equipment must disconnect their equipment before Duke changes the meter because such equipment is susceptible to voltage transients which occur simply by removing and installing the meter.

The Commission has examined the request for approval to development and implement changes for testing in-service self-contained polyphase meters, and the proposal received from the Research Triangle Institute. The Commission holds that Regulation 103-370 shall be waived, and the proposal as submitted by Duke shall be adopted.

With regard to Regulation 103-373 concerning test procedures and accuracies, Duke proposes a waiver of this rule to allow the Company to use a method of determining average error which is consistent with the American National Standards Institute. The

current rule is more restrictive than the standard which provides that plus or minus 2% is acceptable, and that a meter should be adjusted to plus or minus 1%. Under Rule 103-340, Duke is not required to adjust bills if the accuracy is within plus or minus 2%; however, the current rule requires Duke to adjust the meter to .5%. With an increased number of customers requesting to be present for a test, application of the current rule results in customer confusion and irritation, according to Duke. According to Duke also, customers find it difficult to understand why the meter must be adjusted, but the bill is not adjusted. Further, according to Duke, the effort to adjust the meter to within the very narrow range of plus or minus .5% can be time consuming. Several attempts may be required for the meter technician to adjust the meter to within very stringent guidelines. Duke, therefore, requests that the Company be required to adjust meters only if they are shown to register outside a band of plus or minus 1% in accuracy.

The Commission has examined this request for waiver and suggested modification, and agrees that it should be adopted as filed.

Regulation 103-301(3) states that:

In any case where compliance with any of the Commission's Rules and Regulations introduces unusual difficulty, such rule or regulation may be waived by the Commission upon a finding by the Commission that such waiver is in the public interest.

The Commission believes that the request for waiver of the Regulations by Duke as stated above meets this standard. We

believe that under present circumstances, compliance with the Regulations as stated introduces unusual difficulty, and we therefore find that the waiver and modifications as proposed by Duke are granted.

This Order shall remain in full force and effect until further Order of the Commission.

BY ORDER OF THE COMMISSION:

  
Chairman

ATTEST:

  
Executive Director

(SEAL)